



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Monday - December 23, 2002

- ***In the West***, beneficial precipitation is falling across the drought-stricken ***Four Corners States***, but cool, dry weather prevails elsewhere from the ***Rockies westward***. Recent soil moisture improvements are benefiting pastures and winter grains in ***California and the Northwest***.
- ***On the Plains***, cold weather is returning to the ***northern half of the region***, where a patchy snow cover is providing minimal protection from temperatures as low as 0 degrees F. In contrast, heavy snow is developing on the ***southern High Plains***, while showers and thunderstorms are boosting soil moisture reserves for pastures and winter grains across the ***southeastern Plains***. However, the snow is causing holiday travel disruptions, while some of the thunderstorms are causing localized wind damage.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, a lack of significant snow cover and near-normal temperatures are providing favorable conditions for livestock and promoting off-season fieldwork. Snow showers are confined to areas downwind of the ***Great Lakes***.
- ***In the South***, showers and locally severe thunderstorms are overspreading areas ***west of the Delta***, maintaining unfavorably wet field conditions. Dry weather prevails in the ***Southeast***, where copious autumn rainfall eased or eliminated long-term drought, but significantly delayed fieldwork, including summer crop harvesting and winter wheat planting.

Outlook: A storm system over the ***Southwest*** will move across the ***southern Plains*** and into the ***Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic States*** by mid-week. A broad area of snow and rain, including locally severe thunderstorms, will spread from the ***southern Rockies and southern Plains*** into the ***Ohio Valley and Atlantic Coast States***. Elsewhere, dry weather will prevail across the ***northern Rockies, northern Plains, and upper Midwest***, while more wet weather will return by mid-week to the ***Pacific Northwest and northern California***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for December 28, 2002 - January 1, 2003, calls for above-normal precipitation across the ***western and eastern one-thirds of the U.S.***, while drier-than-normal weather is forecast on the ***Plains***. Above-normal temperatures are expected in much of the country, except for near-normal temperatures across the ***nation's southern tier***.

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